FACTORIES ACT (1948)

The first Indian Factories Act was passed on 1st July, 1981. The act was revised and amended seven times (1891, 1911, 1922, 1934, 1948, 1976 and 1987). Some of the important aspects of the act was given below.

Chapter I: Scope and Definition

The act defines factory as *an establishment employing ten or more workers where power is used and twenty or more workers where power is not used.* This act is applicable to the whole of India except Jammu and Kashmir.

Chapter III: Health

Section 11 – Cleanliness
Section 12 – Disposal of waste and effluents
Section 13 – Ventilation and temperature
Section 14 – Dust and fume
Section 15 – Artificial humidification
Section 16 – Overcrowding
Section 17 – Lighting
Section 18 – Drinking water
Section 19 – Latrines and urinals

Every factory shall be kept clean. Dirt, refuse, sewage and sullage must be disposed daily. Floors should be kept clean by washing and disinfection once a week. White washing once in 14 months. Painting and varnishing once in five years. Adequate circulation of air is needed to maintain convenient temperature. A minimum of 500 cu. feet of space for each worker is needed. (For factories installed before 1948 act, a minimum of 350 cu. feet of space per person has been prescribed.)

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If a manufacturing unit emits dust or fumes injurious to the health of the workers, adequate measures shall be taken to prevent their inhalation and accumulation. The factories should maintain the prescribed standards of humidity. The factory management shall provide sufficient light (natural or artificial or both). Drinking water should be provided sufficiently, wholesome, and at convenient place. If more than 250 workers are employed cool water to be provided in hot weather. There should be sufficient latrines and urinals and good maintenance of them. One latrine for 25 workers and one urinal for 50 workers.

Chapter IV: Safety

In the chapter IV precautions needed for the safety of workers are discussed. These include fencing of machinery, nonemployment of young persons on dangerous machines, protection of eyes by the use of goggles, precautions against dangerous fumes and fire, etc. The act says that no worker shall be required to lift or carry loads which are likely to cause him injury. The act advises appointment of a safety officer in factories having 1000 or more workers.

Chapter V: Welfare

In chapter V specific welfare measures (for the promotion of health and provision of medical care) needed to the workers are discussed. These are: washing facilities, facilities for storing and drying clothes, facilities for sitting, first aid appliances, rest rooms, lunch rooms, canteen and creches etc. (one creche for 30 women workers) and one canteen for 250 or more workers. One welfare officer for 500 or more workers is advised.

Chapter VI: Working hours

The act has prescribed a maximum of 48 working hours per week. Maximum working hours allowed per day is nine hours with half-an-hour rest after five hours of continuous work. Each week one full day should be declared as holiday, preferably on Sunday. No women to be employed between 7 PM to 6 AM.

Chapter VII: Employment of young people

According to this act, young persons below 14 years are not allowed to work in factories. Age group 15 to 18 years are declared as adolescents. Adolescent employees are allowed to work only between 6 AM to 7 PM.

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Chapter VIII: Annual leave with wages

Leave with wage to be given at the rate of 1 for 20 days work to an adult and 1 for 15 days work to younger age group workers. Adult woman shall be given maternity leave for 12 weeks (6 weeks before and 6 weeks after delivery).

Chapter IX: Special Provisions

Certain accidents (serious body injuries) to be notified by the manager to the district magistrate and police. The act gives a schedule of notifiable diseases. These are byssinosis, asbestosis, occupational dermatitis, noise, induced hearing loss etc.

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